



THE SCIENCE OF WINE

A significant birthday prompted Earl Sullivan and his wife, Carrie, of Idaho's **TELAYA WINE CO.** to pursue winemaking. The couple was on the beach in Cabo, Mexico, on the verge of turning 40, and contemplating what they could do next.

"We wanted to do something that we were really passionate about," says Earl Sullivan. With Earl being a biochemist and Carrie a veterinarian, the chemistry of wine was enticing, as was the culture and experience of sharing wine with food and friends.

"It was something that we could actually understand and dig into and become very familiar with because of our backgrounds in science," says Sullivan. Another aspect was time with their children. Both Sullivan and his wife were consumed by time-intensive, demanding careers.

The wine business is also demanding, but Sullivan saw it as an opportunity to teach their children about agriculture, science, and the kind of work ethic he learned as a child growing up on a farm in Kentucky. "We wanted the time spent with our children to be meaningful," he says.

The couple began making wine in Washington with friends who were willing to lend space in a facility, and teach them techniques and processes. After their first commercial vintage in 2009, made with Columbia Valley fruit, they came to a crossroads. Stay in Idaho, or move to Washington?

"We decided to take the risk in Idaho," says Sullivan. "Based on research we were doing, we saw the opportunity in the Idaho industry as significantly greater for us long-term. We are on the forefront of what's hopefully going to be an explosion in the Idaho wine industry over the next 10 years, similar to what happened in Washington."

When asked for advice to aspiring winemakers, Sullivan speaks to the importance of balance. "I'm also a winemaker with my wife, which has other costs associated with it," he

says. The couple talks about the business 24-7. "We never get to leave the business."

And so they've had to make important decisions around when to hire more staff (sooner than anticipated) in order to maintain a work-life balance. In 2011, the couple moved into a winery facility in Garden City; and in 2012, made wine with their first Idaho fruit. "It's ended up being the perfect culmination of all the things we wanted," says Sullivan.

TELAYA WINE CO.

